FRANCE OUTSTRIPPING GERMANY IN MUNITION MAKING

M. Loucheur, an Engineer Who Left His Business to Become One of the War Chiefs, Tells Why Allies Cannot Fail to Win

The Country Has Learned Valuable Lessons Which Its Leaders Believe Will Result in an Industrial Victory When Peace Comes

By EDWARD MARSHALL.

PARIS, Feb. 8.

"FRANCE wants peace, continuous and happy, so she will fight this war through to such an end as will mean exactly that."

This positive and uncompromising statement was made to me in a quiet room in Paris by M. Loucheur, French Under Secretary of State for Munitions.

The French Minister of Munitions, whose full title would be Secretary of State for Munitions, M. Albert Thomas, is an extraordinary man. For nineteen months he has been the organizer and the responsible head of the whole French munitions effort, the greatest effort ever made by any country in this world's history, and has achieved a success unparalleled in such executive work save by that of his distinguished confrere, Mr. Lloyd George, who has performed a similar service for Great Britain.

In M. Loucheur M. Thomas has had a wonderful coadjutor. The two have worked together with perfect synchronization, producing a result so efficient that M. Loucheur's reply must be regarded as one of the definitely important utterances of this war.

I have written a great many interviews for American newspapers and in them I rarely have described the man with whom I have discussed great matters. But in writing of this talk with M. Loucheur I find it necessary to explain that as I sat and talked with him I had the unusual European experience of feeling that I might be in the New York headquarters of a great American enterprise, say, in the offices of the United States Steel Corporation or those of the Standard Oil Company, discussing enormously intricate and wonderfully simplified affairs with the executive chief responsible for them.

Of all the important workers in the European war zone I have found none who has impressed me quite as M. Loucheur did. Carefully groomed, shaved to the quick save for his black and very neat mustache, with an energetic and determined mouth and flashing eyes, singularly free from the habit of waste motion, M. Loucheur presently began to make me feel that if, unhappily, we ever are drawn into a war it would be a man of exactly his type whom I might well hope that we would find to do for us such work as he is doing for France.

I found it remarkable that never once during all our conversation was it necessary for me to stop and comment to myself that I was dealing with a Frenchman, a man of a psychology different from ours. He spoke in French, but his ideas were American.

His achievements, like those of his distinguished chief, M. Thomas, have been exactly of that sort and have been accomplished in exactly that manner which would make an American most proud.

As we discussed his work his eyes continually smiled except when I asked some question designed to probe the depths of his determination. Then they smouldered grimly to snap fiercely as he made his final points.

M. Loucheur, before the war, was one of the most eminent engineers in the world.

Indeed, I suppose it must have been with some reluctance that he abandoned his profession in favor of the public service, for this change involved a very heavy money loss to him.

When he entered the Ministry of Munitions he was obliged to write and sign sixty-two letters of resignation from what we would call boards of directors, but the French call boards of administration, of which he was either chairman or member. Never had he made a failure. His word and name were magic in the business and engineering fields. That is why I took him very seriously when he said.

"I very solemnly say that I mean that the French Ministry of Munitions means, that every man and woman in all France means to get ahead of Germany and stay ahead of Germany in the manufacture of arms and ammunition.

"I am sure that you will have no tendency to consider his talk idle, but for the benefit of some who may make that mistake permit me to say further that I am thoroughly informed and do not speak foolishly.

"I know that France and England at the present moment have not accomplished a complete mobilization of their civilian populations; I know that Russia and Italy are even further from such a situation, and I know that even without accomplishing this they can surpass the Central Powers in the production of munitions.

"It is very important that this should be understood. It is not the statement of a statesman or a soldier. It is the statement of an engineer, dealing with exact facts in an exact way. That may seem to be important.

"If it does, that which I am about to say with equal certainty and solemnity must seem very much more so.

"The most carefully exact study of the situation, the most minute computation of figures in every associated direction, the most thorough compilation of facts which bear upon the case, prove to me, who have been in a position to make my examination of all things minute, that if Germany fails to be contented with a doubling of her effort and instead supremely energizes her endeavor until she finds herself able to manufacture three times as much war material of all kinds in each succeeding month as she manufactured last month, we, the Allies, still will be able so far to surpass her that our final end cannot fail of its accomplishment.

"Therefore there can be no question of nor even any reasonable discussion of what that final end will be. We shall fight until we win, and the victory which we shall win will be the victory of law and order, the conquest of war, a triumph which will mean a measurably permanent tranquillity to Europe.

"All of France is in this war. None is left outside the psychological boundaries of the vast struggle. Not only are our young men fighting at our fronts, but our industrial promoters and our workers, men and women, are fighting in their offices and at their benches.

"We do not propose to be beaten. It is not possible to beat us. Not only our fighters willingly will die in their trenches, but our workers willingly will die at their benches rather than see one of the German dreams of conquest over right realized as an accomplished, permanent fact.

"Many have sung the praises, gloriously deserved, of the brave men in the trenches; but the workers in the factories—there is little talk of them. I see them, these people at the benches, and they are very wonderful.

"They have revealed to us and to the world a new kind of wartime courage. We find in our munitions factories a bravery as great as our military officers find behind barbed wire entanglements and in the tragic no man's lands between theirs and the enemy's.

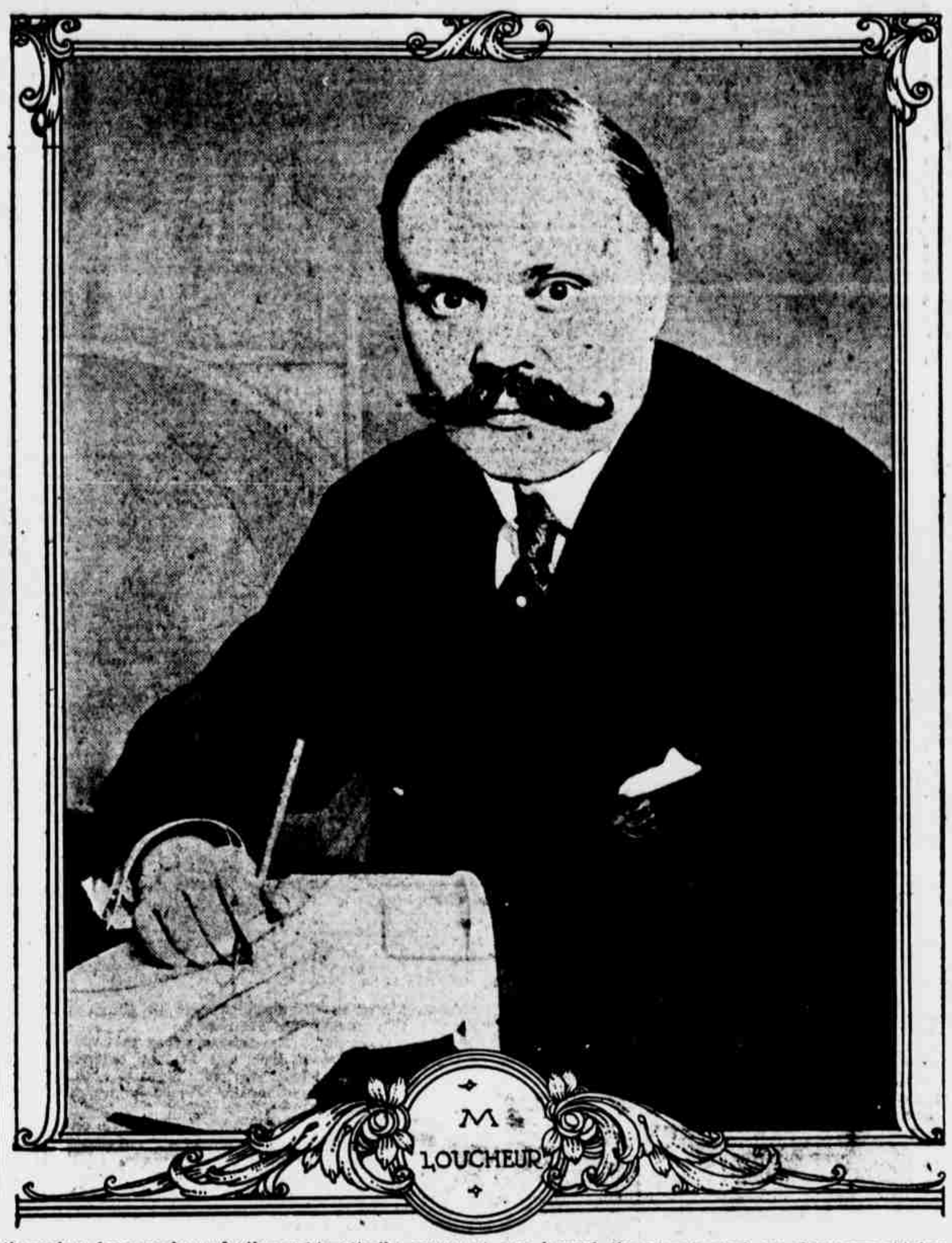
"Sometimes I wonder if the moral courage of some of our munitions workers, thousands of whom have been drawn from the splendid body of French womanhood, is not as fine as that of our brave men at the front.

"It is a war industrial as well as military, and its factory and workshop battles are not less exciting, not less impressive to the man who understands them than the artillery, rifle and machine gun struggles of the battlefield. I wish I might tell you some of the romance of the manufacture of explosives. They would make reading as fascinating as the best descriptions of the fearful chaos worked by the dread product of such manufacture.

"We are learning, in munitions work, that what was once thought to be the coldly practical matter of manufacturing munitions has an immensely important spiritual side. The great employers of America long since announced that successful industry is as much a matter of psychology as it is of practicality.

"European employers perhaps generally doubted this, but we have found it to be truer in the immense wartime strain of French munitions manufacture than it possibly could be in the peace time effort of any nation's ordinary industrial life. So from the war industrial France is learning a great lesson.

"The French scientist and engineer, the French employer and the French workman have risen superbly to the new conditions created by this war, and in rising to them have prepared themselves for a newly productive and newly happy industrial future.



"It is partly, even importantly, because of this revelation that I, who constantly am in contact with French workers, state that France can and will dominate Germany in her future preparation of supplies. There still may be an illusion in the German mind that she can compete successfully, through her full industrial mobilization, with a full industrial mobilization of the Allies. Before the war the thought that she could do so was delusion. Now the thought that she can do it is illusion.

"France is astonishing herself, but no more than England has astonished her. How wonderful the English have been!

"It is impossible, even for a Frenchman, a member of a race rightly supposed to place a very high value upon real friends, to overstate the admiration which the people of the British Empire have justified through their magnificent effort.

"England's cooperation has been far more than that of an ally whose fighting men stand side by side with ours; it has been that of an ally, whose working men and working women also stand side by side with ours.

"I wish I might read to you some of the figures showing the result of Great Britain's vast achievement. But, after all, these figures might convey slight meaning to the ordinary mind. They are too great. Like the figures which represent astronomy's calculations as to infinite space, they stagger and stupefy imagination. The aggregates of this incredible war, mathematically expressed, are beyond the conception of the ordinary human mind.

"If I told you of a day's production and consumption you might reflect on them, but a year's figures must be practically unthinkable to any man. Britain's has been a colossal effort, crowned with stupendous results. Were I able to reveal the facts of Russia's achievements, of Italy's, of Japan's and make a total of them all you would be dazed, unable to conceive a mental picture of them.

"None of the Allies has failed any of the Allies at any time in any way, least of all in the important detail of the manufacture of munitions.

"Nor do we, who are of the munitions department of the great French military machine, fail to realize that we have marvellous cooperation from America, from your own United States. I have been kept in constant touch with, I have been informed minutely concerning the superb work for the Allies which has been done in your native country. The reports of our own agents in New York and elsewhere have been coming by every mail and constantly by cable since November, 1914.

"Do not think that any of us underestimate the importance of the help which the United States has given us. I do not hesitate to state that we could not have done without it.

"Very early in the struggle I was sure that the sympathy of the United States consistently and constantly would be upon the side of the Allies. When I was asked to enter the Ministry it happened that I was planning to send one of my own chief engineers on a special mission of investigation to the States. So it is evident that I had my mind upon America even before the beginning of my work as Under Secretary of State.

"I never doubted that the States ought to be with us and I never doubted that the States would be with us. Never have I doubted that in truth they are with us. Why did I not doubt that they would be with us? Because already in the affairs of my civilian life I had learned that Americans are loyal, honest and progressive men in industry and business. Thus I had had positive proof that they must be psychologically in opposition to our enemies, who were principally wily in everything they undertook.

"As a big manufacturing man I had learned the ideals of America's men of affairs, and I knew them to be identical with ours. It was such experience with some of the best brains in America that kept me from questioning that in whatever way proved to be best they would be arrayed upon our side. I never shall find reasons for the slightest doubt that they will remain upon our side—upon the side of right and justice—until the great war's end."

It is interesting to state that constantly since the beginning of the war M. Loucheur has given evidence of his great faith in American genius and industry. At the very outbreak of the struggle he declared that the French production would need lathes more than it would need patriotism, and that while France could furnish all the patriotism that possibly could be required the lathes would have to come from the United States.

With M. Millerand, who was still War Minister at the time when M. Loucheur came actively into the work, he turned his eyes to the United States for many things. It was he who declared that France must build special plants outside of the State munitions works, and it was to him that the task of providing American machine equipment was entrusted by M. Millerand.

In November, 1914, M. Millerand signed contracts for the equipment of two great plants with a possible output as great as that of all the previously existing works put together. Not later than the following day a mission was started for America, where it purchased machines and automatic tools for these two plants to the value of $2,000,000. Two great American companies supplied all that was needed in the vast machine shops.

After he had started these two great plants M. Loucheur went to M. Herriot in Lyons, where he took over great new buildings which had been intended to serve as immense model slaughterhouses. Within two months these were in operation as munitions factories.

"An example of how quickly we were working at this time," said M. Loucheur to me, "may be found in the fact that the lapse of time between the departure of the machinery from the States and its actual employment in actual munitions production in France amounted to only thirty days. About the same time when the great Lyons plants began to operate a plant one half as large was started near the suburbs of Paris.

"The working staff of these two munitions enterprises now totals more than 14,000 people, and they are the most efficient manufacturing concerns that ever have existed in my country. They manufacture everything in connection with projectiles. They not only make the shells, but they make the fuses to explode them, and this means a wide range of processes.

"The construction of the larger part of an explosive shell may be regarded as a rough if not a crude procedure, but in the fuse which must be attached to each projectile are twenty-two pieces of a delicacy so great that at the start we found it possible to accomplish it only through machinery which theretofore had been used in making watches.

"Yet this minutely delicate work is done with marvellous speed.

"One of the most interesting developments of the manufacture of munitions in France has been the elimination of red tape from the work."

Here let me, the writer, comment. In civil circles nothing more startling than the elimination of red tape in England has occurred as a result of this great war, except the equally complete elimination of red tape in France.

"The manufacture of shell cases and fuses and projectiles was of necessity accompanied by the manufacture of tri-nitrate of toluol and other ingredients of explosives," M. Loucheur continued. "It was carried on by my countrymen with great efficiency and with a gratifying freedom from industrial accidents.

"Then came the necessity, imposed upon us by our adversaries, of the manufacture of asphyxiating gas. Exactly sixty days elapsed between the time of their inception and the day of the completion of the first trinitrate of toluol and asyhpxiating gas plants.

"The thought of Grenoble as the site of a great munitions plant was natural to me because I have great faith in water power and had been one of the first to utilize it upon a large scale in the Grenoble region."

M. Loucheur is too modest a man himself to be willing to intimate that his activities have extended outside of France, but it remains true that he has done much to help the other allies.

One of his great feats was accomplished when he went to Naples and there brought about the construction of an enormous plant of about the same size as the vast Lyons enterprise. It was begun in the spring of 1916 and in late summer was at work. It is interesting to note that this and other Italian plants were definitely planned so that after the war it will be possible very easily to adapt them to the manufacture of such machinery as hitherto Italy has imported from Germany.

In the manufacture of heavy guns M. Loucheur's activities have been as notable as they have been in the manufacture of projectiles. As the collaborator of Mr. Thomas he investigated the great Russian plants for the production of large ordnance, and as soon as he got back he organized two more in France. At about the same time he became president of the Hotchkiss Arms Company and doubled its output of machine guns, both for France and England.

"It pleases me to have been able to manufacture machine guns," he told me with a smile. "Before I entered the public service in an executive capacity I was like a soldier in a trench, determined enough, but carefully protected.

"I dreaded to attack, for I knew that the moment I entered public life I should be exposed to the machine gun fire of countless minds and eyes. This similarity of public criticism to machine gun fire has always impressed me and has made the manufacture of actual machine guns especially significant to me.

"The immense addition to the potential industrial force of the nations of the Allies which has resulted from the intensified effort necessary to the manufacture of ammunition and munitions will be felt very strongly after the war ends," M. Loucheur continued.

"We have found it necessary to resort to the use of machine tools and to follow so-called efficiency methods very carefully in the manufacture of munitions.

"We have been slow in adopting both in the course of our ordinary industrial effort. Now that we have learned the lesson of their effectiveness, however, we never shall go back to our old methods.

"So most of us very earnestly believe that our now certain military victory over Germany almost immediately will be followed by an industrial and therefore a commercial victory over her."

PROPHECY OF WAR'S END

DON SANTE MONTI, a learned priest of Como, Italy, who is president of the local historical society and director of the civic museum, has a seventeenth century book containing a collection of letters, verses in Latin and Italian by uncertain authors and other documents. The book evidently belonged originally to the writer Paolo Giovio.

Among other things it contains a curious prophecy about the present war attributed to St. Malachy. It is well known that several works attributed to St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, who died in 1148, are probably spurious. His "Prophecy Concerning the Future Roman Pontiffs," which has produced an extensive literature, was really written in 1590 and is supposed to have been forged to support the election of Cardinal Simoncelli to the papal chair.

The war prophecy in the Como book is written in Latin in the same handwriting as other documents, and in all probability it was copied from some earlier manuscript in the seventeenth century. It is dated 1469, over three centuries after St. Malachy's death. There is no doubt, however, that the prophecy was written 300 years ago, and its interest is, therefore, undiminished despite the fact that it is wrongly attributed to St. Malachy.

The following is a careful English translation of the prophecy from the Latin original:

"Great wars will happen and many will perish. Prophecy of the Blessed Malachy, 1469.

"When the first number will find the ninth and both will join the first and the sixth numbers [1916], in the sixth month [August], when twice four and twice ten days are passed [the 28th], then the head of that terrible beast which for two years and a month has already filled the world with blood and slaughter, devastation and death, shall be crushed. From the Book of Prophecies of the Blessed Malachy in the year 1469.

"When the first number finds the ninth and both are joined with the first and sixth numbers, in the sixth month, when twice four and twice ten days have passed, the new people called from Romulus [the Rumanians] will rise and conclude an alliance with the powerful people. Then that ferocious beast that since a year and a month had filled all the world with blood and slaughter, with devastation and death, surrounded on all sides and wounded, vainly roaring, will seek whom to devour and find none. There will be great devastations during all the time, when new moons will rise and set three and ten times, then on the fifth day, when the sun comes out of the sign of the Lion, he will die of the worst death, and a Virgin whose name is composed of two iotas [i], two alphas [a], with a tau [t] and a lamda [l], will crush his head and his spoils will be divided among the Latin people.

"A single instant more than the allotted time will not pass before the events above written come to happen."

The prediction of Rumania's intervention for August 28, 1916, has come true, as this date corresponds to Germany's declaration of war against Rumania, and the period during which the war has been in progress, namely, two years and one month, is also substantially accurate, since from the outbreak of the war in the beginning of August, 1914, to the end of August, 1916, the date of Rumania's intervention, two years and a month passed.

The virgin referred to in the prophecy is evidently meant to typify Italy, since the Greek letters composing her name correspond to two i's, two a's a t and an l, which form the name Italia. Evidently, according to the prophecy, Italy is destined to play a decisive role in the war and bring about its end.

The end of the war is clearly predicted, and as there was a new moon on August 28, 1916, counting thirteen lunar months from then and taking into account the fact that the sun crosses the sign of the Lion in summer, it is comparatively easy to calculate approximately that, according to the prophecy, the war will end toward the middle of next September, until when "great devastations over all the world will happen."

It is a fact that with Rumania's intervention Germany or the "ferocious beast" of the prophecy is surrounded on all sides, and it is likewise a fact that a great deal of "vain roaring" is going on, so that the prophecy besides being curious deserves to be remembered.

LISTENING TO VOX POPULI AS INTERPRETED BY THE REGULARS AT THE BLUE BOWL INN

The War Is Barred, but the Critic, With Some Assistance, Sheds Much Light on the Other Topics of the Day

By JAMES HUNEKER.

THE UNDRAMATIC CAST.

PROF. RIGHTE: Aged 60. Wears academic whiskers.

Mr. Centre: A critic. Aged 35. Clean shaven.

Dr. Kurt: About 40 years. Sideboards, medical student style.

Raphael Rosom: Aged 25. Beardless. Amateur of the Eleven Arts.

Mr. Stump: Host. Tuft on chin; otherwise devoid of hair. Aged 65.

Gamaliel, called Gam: Waiter. Also bald and shaven. Any age.

Crissie: Cook. Ageless. Acrid of temper. Old timer in the kitchen.

Visitors: Friendly policemen, thirsty citizens, tramps.

Time: Now. Place: The Blue Bowl Inn; not far from Seventh avenue nor too near Tenth street; but far enough away to escape the invasion of fifth rate painters, poets, composers, amateur Bohemians and other insipid and virulent pests of the metropolis. They know not this venerable inn, with its taproom, within hearing of the chimes of St. Jefferson's Church—if it has chimes.

The scene plays in an old fashioned chop house, a cosey single room with a small zinc bar at rear. Tables without napery. Comfortable chairs. On the panelled walls are playbills, sporting prints, portraits of actors, actresses, pugilists, an occasional local politician, and famous race horses. There is an old decayed clock in the corner which solemnly ticks, though it does not tell the hour. It has not been wound up for twenty years, but is determined to keep up its reputation as a timepiece that has lived long.

A big stove holds the centre. Sanded floor. Gas and oil lamps. Cleanliness, order, cordiality prevail. Bill of fare never varies: Steaks, chops, ham, bacon, eggs—better in omelette than boiled; bread, butter, mustard, baked potatoes and angels on horseback—i.e., fish cakes with a poached egg on top (a specialty of the house). Sauces and pickles (home made) free. Ale from keg. Beer in bottles. Spirits. No wines, except an ancient pale sherry.

Dinner from midday to 2 P. M. Supper from 6 to 1 A. M. Pipes permitted at all hours; cigarettes frowned on. As long as there is a guest the Blue Bowl Inn keeps open; but front door is promptly closed at 1 A. M. After that three significant knocks at an intimate little side door (beloved by police and laity alike). Place opens late in the morning.

The critic sits and muses. At the table is the host. A winter evening about 10 o'clock. A large tabby cat purrs before the stove in competition with the ticking of the antiquated clock.

Host (absently)—Well?

Critic—Well.

Host—How many wells make a river?

Critic—You mean—Salt River?

Host (with warmth)—Now, no joking as to that, Mr. Centre. If any one doesn't like my politics he needn't cross my door sill.

Critic—Of course, friend Stump. I merely mentioned Salt River because it's further north than the River of Doubt, and there is a famous cave there where they keep on view political stalactites and stalagmites, such as your two idols—who are up there at the present time. Mr. Stalactite and Mr. Stalagmite; tall, proper men, but both hopelessly frozen. Last November they were turned into pillars of salt; regular salt trusts—something like Mrs. Lot in the Good Book—and—— (Mr. Centre pauses for breath.)

Host (brightly as an idea crosses his slow moving but concrete imagination)—What'll you have, Mr. Centre? The drink's on the house. Hullo! here's the Professor. Welcome, Prof. Righte. You're just in time. I'm paying off my last election scores.

(Enter Professor. Shakes off snow, dries his dripping whiskers, hangs up hat and coat, takes off rubbers. Tabby, resenting intrusion, leaves the stove in a temper and retreats under the bar. Professor sits down.)

Professor—Phew! what a storm.

Host—Where's Gam? Hang that chap. He's gossiping with the cook. Gam! I say. (Claps his hands. Enter Gam, in a hurry.)

Gam—Here, sir. (They give their orders. Brief silence.)

Host—I was just saying to Mr. Centre what awful weather for this time of the year.

Critic—But worse in Europe; the war——

Host (warningly)—Nix on the war talk, Mr. Centre.

(Door flies open; in comes Dr. Kurt and Raphael Rosom. Snow flecked. They bustle over to the table.)

Rosom—Did I hear you say something about the war? Gam, some mulled ale and a pipe.

Host (hotly)—Yes, nix on the war, is what I say.

Rosom—Let me see, isn't that the expression that riled, or puzzled, Mr. Wells in "Mr. Brithling Sees It Through"?

Dr. Kurt—It is. The English novelist knows a lot, but about America he is still in Cimmerian gloom. He doesn't know, for instance, that over here that sign in bars and public places is hung up to prevent bloodshed, and is not a proof of the public's indifference concerning the great struggle. We have so many different nationalities here in our melting pot that violent differences of opinion are bound to be expressed. Now the war——

Host (grimly)—Nix——

Rosom — You are right, Stump. Where's those refreshments?

Crissie (poking her head through little window behind the bar)—Did I hear some one order angels on horseback? Or was it bacon and——

All—No!

(Crissie looks cross and pulls down sliding panel.)

Host—Gam! Bless my soul, that man's off again. (Host leaves.)

Doctor—Queer old blade is Stump, to be sure. He's English born, yet he won't talk war.

Rosom—Sensible, I should say. But you haven't heard where we were tonight, you other fellows. We saw "Pendennis" with dear old John Drew.

Professor (scowls)—I prefer my John Drew without dragging in dear old Thackeray. (He coughs threateningly.)

Rosom—That's what I think. Just as we prefer our D'Annunzio without opera thrown in.

Critic—See here, Rafael, on the dead level, did you hear "Francesca da Rimini"? And did you really see "Pendennis"?

(The young man seems embarrassed as he sips his from tankard; but momentarily.)

Rosom—Well, since you put it that way I only saw one act of "Pendennis" and I read the newspapers about the new opera.

Critic—Good boy! Made a clean breast of it. Now tell me how many fine arts do you study and criticise?

Rosom (smiles)—That's easy. I love all the Eleven Arts, but I only know one—music. You see, I can manage the playola. Not much. But it trains the ear.

Critic (sarcastically)—Yes, as you say, it trains the ear. How about the thirst?

(Rafael smiles enigmatically, but does not reply. Again silence, broken by the entrance of an old shabby woman, her head enveloped in a shawl. She tries to hide a pitcher.)

Old Woman—What a blessed night, Mr. Stump; please, a sup of ale. Hello, Crissie!

Crissie (who is just taking a peep)—Hello, yourself! (Disappears. Elderly lady vanishes.)

Doctor (moralizing)—That's it. Poverty. Drink. Oh! the lower classes! They should be reformed.

Professor—Reform them? Better begin by reforming yourself, eh, Doctor. (General laughter. The cat reappears. Gam enters in haste.)

Gam—Any you gentlemen order? (A negative silence.)

Critic—Yes, reform is a good dog. But moderation is a better. The way to reform is not to prohibit, but educate the masses how to drink.

Professor (tartly)—Mr. Centre, how many drinks do you average in twenty-four hours? Come, now. (Critic flushes, seems confused; then working up a raging crescendo.)

Critic—How many? I never counted them, Professor. But I know how to drink and keep sober——

Professor — No Vancethompsoning, please!

Critic—I mean I can take it or leave it alone. (Critic becomes calmer now.)

Professor—Yes, yes; we've all heard that sort of talk, and always in a rum mill.

Host (deprecatingly)—My place ain't no rum mill, as you call it. I always keep a respectable house. I never sell to drunkards or minors. (Is immensely flushed with self-satisfaction. Takes a huge swallow.)

Chorus—Sure you do, Stump. Let's all have another drink. Gam!

Host—Thank ye, gentlemen. I will say that I never see none of you a little the worse for liquor, though Mr. Rosom has come in very early and feeling quite dry. (Hilarity universal.)

Chorus—After a bout with the Eleven Arts. No wonder! (They drink to the health of the Host and to the confusion of all prohibitionists.)

Host (genially, as he puffs a long, well browned clay pipe)—Here's what I think of that Billy Sunday. If he kept public house as I did, man and boy, for forty-odd years he wouldn't give it up now, would he? Not much. Rum didn't agree with his tummy, so he preaches against rum and a pretty penny he must turn.

Doctor—Demon Rum always did pay, going or coming. And old Demon Rum has made a good showing on the French and German lines.

Host (angrily)—I thought I said nix! (Laughter.)

Chorus—Tell us, Mister Host, what can we talk about then?

Host—Anything you've a mind to, so you don't lose your temper. I mean anything except the blamed old war.

Critic—The prohibition question is a more threatening one than we dare acknowledge to ourselves. This United States of Hysterica is given to these sudden attacks of sackcloth and ashes. The fact, too, that Russia is gone dry, and only drinks wood alcohol or turpentine—when available—counts with the cranks over here. The truth is, gentlemen, there's a crowd in this land of ours, call them Puritans or what you like, that are all after political prizes. All over America thousands of women fed on home journalism, the curse of drink, the immorality of New York, the horrid banditti of Wall Street; also fed on miserable food, home cooked, poisoning their innards with fried steak, their silly minds with new thought, unchristian science, spiritualism, table rapping—don't interrupt, please!—it's as bad as it ever was, all this fortune telling, superstitions, as bad as during the witch hunting days—these lorn females with their lean foibles, they are too anæmic even to be barbarians—were you ever in a town when they voted? or at a Chautauqua or a camp meeting, where some greasy, long haired pot bellied humbug told the men and women they were the salt of the earth? No, not Bill Bryan alone; there are five thousand replicas of him perambulating the country, stirring up hatred against the light, fomenting against vaccination, vivisection; against all that has made mankind healthier, happier. Well, if you have seen them you will understand the prohibitionists and the suffragettes, their allies; all the gum chewing, cultured crew, with their canned music and movies. Banishing rum is only the beginning of their game. Diet and dress will follow. Already in Nebraska they arrest you if your breath smells of liquor. Tobacco will follow. In some cities cigarettes are already forbidden——

Host—And a good thing it is. Them dope pipes——

Critic—Don't interrupt, Stump, when you see a man in full swing! Tobacco, I say, and kissing pretty girls. And not allowing a man to kiss his wife on Sundays——

Chorus—Hear! Hear!

Critic—Cynics! Bachelors! Some other fellow's wife is what you mean, I suppose. I'm on to your parallax. Every personal liberty will be either suppressed or curtailed. All on account of our miserable souls. I don't want to be saved from the burning pit. I'd rather be in hades without Billy Sunday, Bill Bryan and their ilk than in paradise with them. They turn the very atmosphere a dingy gray—like a November fog in London. They rob life of its meaning, its beauty, its values. If we are not permitted to use our free will, are, in a word, moral prisoners, what becomes of individual morality—I won't even say freedom? It's about time earnest men and women woke up—yes, there are lots of women here who see through the tactics of these prohibitionists for political revenue; see through the hole in the suffragette millstone—there was no talk of votes for women till boodle was raised; see through the political dodge of the widow Schoenberg, Karolina Kaufman Katz, Mother Scratch and their English friends, the Spankhurst Sisters, in their thrilling vaudeville act, burning barns and rottenegging Prime Ministers—we all know what these ladies are after! Office, office, office. (The cat gives a desperate cry and, fur on end, spars in the air with an unseen foe.)

Gam—Did you call, gentlemen?

Host (anxiously)—Who said officer? What's the row now?

(Critic sits down, making a despairing gesture.)

Professor—Why so hot, little man? Votes for the girls won't be a national misfortune. It's the cranks, the scheming politicians that are to be feared——

Doctor—Haven't these same politicians got hold of the men already? Once a politician, always a grafter.

Host (beaming)—Hurrah! Them's my sentiments.

Rosom (critically)—Oh, well, the country is not going to the devil—that is, not for a few thousand years. Women at the polls will be as familiar a sight some day as women in trousers dancing the fox trot. It's all in the viewpoint. All is relative——

Host (jocular)—Even our poor relatives. Ha! ha! Gam, I say; where the deuce is that boy? He'll be the death of me some day. (Gam rushes in. He has been smoking outdoors. He pants.)

Gam—Any orders, gentlemen?

Critic (in the key oracular)—A petticoat President in the White House! A country ruled by petticoats is doomed.

Rosom (mockingly)—Nix on the women talk.

Critic—This country is getting sick of cranks and reformers. Let the vegetarians, anti-vaccinationists and anti-vivisectionists and other degenerate vaudevillists be sent to the ducking stool.

Rosom—Spell it with a "V," Samivel.

Host—Closing up time, gentlemen. One o'clock. Order your last round.

(No one stirs. Three ominous knocks are heard at side door. Critic [illegible]. It is only Barney, the policeman on the beat. He stamps. Shakes off snow. Gives a view halloo at sight of Gam and goes to bar. Makes mysterious signals to Host.)

Policeman (executing [illegible])—Good evening, gentlemen. Good evening, Boss. Same old medicine. (Singing) "Come one, come all, and have a ball, with Limerick Dan, the rubber." Good evening, gentlemen.

Crissie (looks in)—Kitchen's closed! (A roar of protest.)

All—But we want angels on horseback! We didn't know it was so late.

Crissie (reappearing)—Keep on wanting. (Vanishes for the night.)

Critic—True temperance consists in moderation, my friends.

Chorus—Let's all take an immoderate nightcap. The devil fly away with your prohibition. (They drink eagerly. Then put on hats, overcoats, rubbers.)

Gam—Don't forget the handsome waiter, gentlemen. (They contribute to his savings bank.)

Host—Good night, good night. To-morrow will soon be here. (They go out.) Lively lads all, but I wish they wouldn't gabble so much about prohibition, for they forget to drink. Lights out, Gam! Here you (to cat) upstairs to bed with you. (Exit humming.) "A clear sky and a westerly wind is all I want in the morning.")